

STILLWATER STATE FOREST
KING HEMLOCK TIMBER SALE PROJECT
INITIAL PROPOSAL
June 18, 2013



INTRODUCTION

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), Stillwater Unit, is proposing the King Hemlock Timber Sale Project. The project is in the initial stages of public involvement and project development for an environmental analysis. This proposal would harvest 3 to 4 million board feet (MMbf) of sawtimber from portions of 2,732 acres of State trust land located approximately 10 miles northwest of Whitefish. Harvesting would occur in portions of sections 6, 7, 17, 18, 19, 20, 29 and 30 of T32N, R22W; and section 32 of T33N, R22W (see attached map).

This project is part of an ongoing effort to produce revenue for the State trusts while maintaining a healthy and productive forest into the future. Montana State University Agricultural College (MSU 2nd Grant), Common Schools, State Normal Schools, Montana Tech. and School for the Deaf & Blind are the trusts that would receive money from this project.

COMMENT PERIOD

This notice initiates a 30-day comment period, which provides the public an opportunity to become involved at the initial stage of the project. In addition, this document provides general information about the proposal and its objectives. If requested, another notice with greater detail will be sent once the project progresses and proposed harvest units have been defined.

Comments and concerns you may have about harvesting timber and the associated activities, which include roadwork and site preparation, are welcome and will be considered during analysis and design of the project.

The comment period will remain open until July 17, 2013.

PROJECT PARAMETERS

The lands involved in this proposed project are held by the State of Montana in trust for the support of various school trusts (see above). The State Board of Land Commissioners and DNRC are required by law to administer these lands to produce the largest measure of reasonable and legitimate return over the long term for these beneficiary institutions, as required in *Section 77-1-202, Montana Codes Annotated (MCA)*.

DNRC would also consider other opportunities that would produce long-term revenue to the State trusts. However, the proposals must show the ability to produce long-term revenue comparable to timber management. *Administrative Rules of Montana 36.11.451 through 36.11.456* address the option of DNRC to accept applications for a *Timber Conservation License in Lieu of Timber Sale* and implement the bidding process for the License. A written notice of intent to request this License and the \$100 fee must be delivered to the Stillwater Unit office within 60 days of the date this Initial Proposal was provided. For further information, please contact Mike McMahon at Stillwater State Forest (406) 881-2670.

DNRC will manage the lands involved in this project according to the philosophy and standards in the State Forest Land Management Plan, which states:

"Our premise is that the best way to produce long-term income for the trust is to manage intensively for healthy and biologically diverse forests. Our understanding is that a diverse forest is a dynamic forest that will produce the most reliable and highest long-term revenue stream... In the foreseeable future, timber

management will continue to be DNRC's primary source of revenue and primary tool for achieving biodiversity objectives."

Furthermore, the project design will follow *Montana's Administrative Rules for Forest Management (Annotated Rules of Montana 36.11.401 through 36.11.456)* and the Habitat Conservation Plan when it applies.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Generate revenue for the trusts while ensuring forest productivity into the future.
- Promote biodiversity on State ownership by managing for appropriate or desired stand structures and species compositions based on ecological characteristics, such as topography, habitat type, disturbance regime, and unique characteristics.
- Contribute to the annual targets of timber-harvest volumes of DNRC and the Northwestern Land Office. DNRC is required by State law (77-5-221 through 223, MCA) to harvest approximately 57.6 MMbf of timber annually and produce revenue over time.
- Apply Best Management Practices (BMPs) or meet design criteria necessary to promote long term water quality during logging and road construction operations. Road construction may include site improvements, new temporary construction, obliteration, and maintenance.
- A portion of the proposed project area falls within the Whitefish Neighborhood Plan (WNP). The concepts, policies, and implementation strategies of the WNP will be applied to that portion of the project area.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT AREA AND OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE AREA TO MEET THE OBJECTIVES

1. The project area is located approximately 10 air miles northwest of Whitefish along the Lower Whitefish Road.
2. The desired future condition of the majority of the project area is the western white pine timber coverytype with a small amount of the western larch/Douglas-fir timber coverytype. Due to mortality, salvage, and successional in-growth, these stands have converted to mixed conifer, subalpine fir, lodgepole and western larch/Douglas-fir coverytypes. Portions of the project area contain older stands (150-years-plus in age). As with all stands in the project area, these areas are being analyzed for health and potential management opportunities.

Regeneration treatments (such as seedtree with reserves) and intermediate treatments with group-selection are being proposed as part of this project. The intent of these treatments is to emulate natural events such as fires or windstorms. The project objectives are to establish regeneration of the desired species mix, improve vigor/tree growth, meet the *Forest Management Rules* and Habitat Conservation Plan in relation to wildlife, fisheries, and water quality as well as provide improved access for potential fire suppression efforts.

3. The proposed roadwork includes incorporating BMPs for site improvements. Existing roads will be used where feasible. In addition, temporary spur roads may be constructed to reach the proposed harvest areas; these segments of road would be closed following harvesting activities.
4. The State is still completing:
 - reconnaissance surveys,
 - timber-stand inventories,
 - watershed and sediment-source surveys,
 - noxious-weed surveys, and

- an assessment of transportation/logging systems.
- 5. The following *Project Area Map* displays the project area and the approximate location of proposed harvest units. The map is not intended to portray that we plan to harvest all the acres displayed. As the project develops, the location, size, and shape of the proposed harvest units may be adjusted as public input is considered and field reconnaissance is completed by the Interdisciplinary Team (ID Team). This ID Team is made up of a hydrologist, a wildlife biologist, and foresters.

If you do not have comments or concerns at this time, but wish to stay involved in the project, please fill out and return the following form, telephone the information, or e-mail Jason Glenn at jaglenn@mt.gov. If DNRC does not receive a response by July 17, 2013, you will be removed from the mailing list.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS

Please submit your comments by July 17, 2013 to: Montana DNRC Stillwater Unit, c/o Jason Glenn, P.O. Box 164, Olney, MT 59927; call this information to 406-881-2371; or email to jaglenn@mt.gov.

If you do not have comments or concerns at this time, but wish to stay involved in the project, please email or telephone Jason Glenn, or complete the following form and mail it to the address shown. If DNRC does not receive a response by July 17, 2013, you will be removed from the mailing list.

RE: KING HEMLOCK TIMBER SALE INITIAL PROPOSAL

I do not have concerns or comments at this time, but would like to stay involved in the process of project development.

Name: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____
eMail: _____

Please send completed form to arrive by July 17, 2013.

Montana DNRC Stillwater Unit
c/o Jason Glenn
P.O. Box 164
Olney MT 59927
Telephone 406-881-2371; or email jaglenn@mt.gov



Proposed King Hemlock Timber Sale

Sections 6, 7, 17, 18, 19, 20, 29, & 30, T32N R22W
Section 32, T33N R22W

